Father Vellankal remembered as joyful missionary disciple

By Carrie McClish and Michele Jurich  Staff writers

Rev. Mathew Vellankal, pastor of St. Bonaventure Church, is being remembered as a joyful, extraordinary priest who met people where they are, brought out the best in his staff and parishioners and maintained a devotion to the Blessed Mother.

Father Vellankal, 61, died Oct. 10 in a car accident in Colusa County. The accident also took the life of Archbishop Dominic Jala, SDB, of the Archdiocese of Shillong, India, and apostolic administrator of Nongstong, India.

Father Joseph Parekkatt, pastor of St. Anne Parish, which serves the Rosemoor community of Walnut Creek, was injured. He is recovering from the injuries in the hospital.

Father Vellankal’s joyful spirit and faith will be ‘deeply missed’, said Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ, said. ‘May his soul and the soul of Archbishop Jala rest in the peace of Christ.’

Services for Father Vellankal are a 7 p.m., Oct. 20 vigil at Holy Spirit Church, 37588 Fremont Blvd, Fremont, and funeral Mass at 10:30 a.m. Oct. 21 at St. Bonaventure Church, 5662 Clayton Road, Concord. Archbishop Jala’s remains will be returned to India.

‘He knew how to pull out the very best in people,’ said the Very Rev. Brandon Macadaeg, SJ. ‘May his soul rest in peace. He always, always kind.’

Father Macadaeg also recalled Father Vellankal as ‘being happy all the time.’

‘He had a tremendous faith in people, in the gifts and talents everyone had and he was brilliant in allowing that person to shine,’ Father Macadaeg said. ‘That’s what he did for me.’

Father Vellankal was pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Fremont, where Father Macadaeg was pastor. ‘There’s a man who never, ever judged anyone. He looked at the gifts and talents everyone had and he was brilliant in allowing that person to shine. That’s what he did for me.’

Father Macadaeg also recalled Father Vellankal’s faith. ‘He had a tremendous prayer life, deeply Catholic,’ he said. ‘He loved the Blessed Mother very, very much.’

Father Vellankal had suffered a leg injury when he was working in Belgium. He walked a tremendously painful half-mile to the Shrine of Our Lady of Banneux.

“When he walked into the shrine, he was healed,” Father Macadaeg said. “At Holy Spirit we had a great Marian devotion;”

“He loved the Eucharist,” he said. “It was his vision of Perpetual Adoration at Holy Spirit. It is a tremendous gift to the parish.”

Rev. Oscar Rojas, who serves as parochial vicar at St. Bonaventure Parish in Concord, said he has learned many things from his first assignment, also with Father Vellankal.

He recalled Father Vellankal as “being happy all the time.”

“He always thanked people, Father Rojas said. “Tell them how grateful you are for what they do,” he said. Such encouragement, Father Rojas said, is that “people feel joyful for what they do.”

Father Vellankal, he said, was present at all Masses, greeting people at the beginning and end. He created a good community in the staff, he said, to help each other.

“He was always kind,” Father Rojas said.

(Continued on Page 4.)

Vigil of Lights tradition at four cemeteries

Staff report

The tradition of the Vigil of Lights, an All Souls remembrance, continues at four of the Catholic cemeteries of the Diocese of Oakland.

Vigil of Lights celebrations will begin with a prayer service at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 1 at St. Joseph Cemetery in San Pablo, Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Hayward, Holy Cross Cemetery in Antioch and Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Lafayette.

To order candles placed at the cemetery with a loved one’s name, order online by Oct. 27 at www.cfcsoakland.org/lad.

On All Souls Day, Nov. 2, Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. in all of the Catholic cemeteries. Cemetery hours will be extended to 8:30 p.m. that day at many of the cemeteries.
Two former Oakland bishops in line for national leadership

By Courtney Mares

Catholic News Agency

WASHINGTON — Nearly two centuries ago, John Henry Newman was England’s most well-known Anglican priest, until he asked everything to become a Catholic. On Oct. 13, he became a saint.

As Pope Francis officially recognized Newman, John Henry Newman, Marianne Theresia, Marguerite Bays, Giuseppina Vanniri, and Dulce Lopes as saints.

The canonization was attended by Prince Charles, heir to the Britih throne, along with delegates from the Church of England. “Today we give thanks to the Lord for our new saints. They walked by faith and now we invoke their intercession,” he said.

Pope Francis read a quote from one of Newman’s sermons describing the holiness of daily life: “The Christian has a deep, silent, hidden peace, which the world sees not … The Christian is cheerful, easy, kind, gentle, courteous, candid, unassuming; has no pretense … with so little that is unusual or striking in his bearing, that he may easily be taken at first sight for an ordinary man.”

Newman was a 19th Century theologian, priest, Catholic and cardinal. Born in 1801, he was before his conversion a well-known and well-respected Oxford academic, Anglican preacher and public intellectual.

Newman’s 1864 conversion to the Catholic faith was controversial in England, and resulted in the loss of many friends, including his own sister who never spoke to him again.

He became a priest in 1847 and founded the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in England. He was particularly dedicated to education, founding two schools for boys and the Catholic University of Ireland. His “Ideas is a University” became a foundational text on Catholic higher education. He was a prolific author and popular letter writer.

Newman died in Birmingham in 1890 at 89. St. John Henry Newman was the Catholic Church’s first new saint since the canonization of St. John Ogilvie in 1976.

“Let us all be to ... kindly lights’ amid the encircling gloom, Jesus, ‘stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine as Thou shinest: so to shine as to be a light to others,’” Pope Francis said in his Oct. 13 homily, quoting parts of Newman’s “Meditations on Christian Doctrine.”

Along with Newman, Pope Francis canonized four women: Brazilian St. Maria Rita Lopes Fortes; popularly known as Sister Dulce; who died in 1986; Indian St. Mariam Thresia Chiramel Markandayan, founder of the Congregation of the Holy Family, who died in 1936; St. Marguerite Bayes, a Swiss laywoman and mystic, who died in 1878; and St. Josephine Vanniri, the Italian co-founder of the Daughters of St. Camillus, who died in 1911.

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U.S. BISHOPS

Two former Oakland bishops in line for national leadership

From wire reports

WASHINGTON — Two former bishops of the Diocese of Oakland, Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco and Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of the Archdiocese of Detroit are among a slate of 10 candidates to get the most for the next president or vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The U.S. bishops will vote during their fall general assembly taking place Nov. 11-13 in Baltimore. Other bishops who are candidates include Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese of the Military Affairs, Archbishop Paul J. Coakley of Oklahoma City; Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas; Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles; Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee; Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Springfield in Illinois; and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana.

The current president, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Houston, Texas, and the current vice president, Archbishop Joseph H. Gomez, will complete their terms at this meeting.

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By Most Rev. Robert Barron

I write these words in the Rome airport, on my way to England, where I will deliver a paper to our friend Bishop John Henry Newman and evangelization. I’m still baskin’ in the glow of the splendid Mass of canonization on Oct. 13, presided over by Pope Francis. It was attended by tens of thousands of bishops, priests and faithful from all over the world.

Standing in the central loggia of St. Peter’s Basilica during the liturgy was a marvelously tapestried, featuring a portrait of Newman, and I found myself gazing at it frequently as the Mass progressed. It can’t help but wonder what Newman himself would have thought if someone had told him when he arrived in Rome in 1846 to commence studies for the Catholic priesthood that one day in the distant future his Mass of canonization would be celebrated at St. Peter’s.

He would have been, I’m quite sure, utterly hummmed. Newly converted to the faith, seen by many of his former co-religionists as a traitor, distinctly uneasy in the Catholic intellectual environment, the Newman of 1846 felt more than a little at sea.

What he did pay a courtesy visit on Pope Pius IX. Newman bent down to kiss the Pope’s foot, which was the custom of the time, and in the process managed to bang his forehead against the pope’s nail. This, he felt, was a metaphor of his relationship with Pius IX, and it also serves as a fitting symbol of his rejection of thought, and feeling of discord in the Catholic world.

Things didn’t get particularly better when Newman returned to England. Anglicans, who made up the overwhelming majority of the population, were still, of course, suspicious of him, and Catholics were not quite ready to accept him fully. Upon becoming rector of the newly established Catholic University of Dublin, Newman composed the magnificent “Lectures on the History of the Catholic Church,” which struck them as relativizing dogma, and his later Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent, clearly departed from Catholic orthodoxy.

Established in 1879 by the Catholic Cemeteries, which strike them as relativizing dogma, the softball sessions offer a chance to learn about funeral pre-planning at all scheduled to start at 12:30 p.m. on Nov. 5 of Faith Formation and Evangelization, on esthetic sessions scheduled at four cemeteries in the process managed to bang his forehead against the pope’s nail. This, he felt, was a metaphor of his relationship with Pius IX, and it also serves as a fitting symbol of his rejection of thought, and feeling of discord in the Catholic world.

After years of silence, Newman’s name appeared on the Diocese of Oakland’s list of priests credibly accused of sexual abuse by a minor. He resigned from his position in 1982, and died on Dec. 31, 1986.

In 2005 Bishop Allen H. Vigneron announced a global settlement of 56 lawsuits against the Diocese of Oakland for sexual misconduct with minors by 13 priests. A total of $56,358,000 was paid, with $22,318,000 coming from the diocese and the remainder paid by insurers. The diocese covered its portion of the settle-
Band and I became his parishioners and August 2013 at Holy Spirit Parish after we received his personal Christmas new parish, St Bonaventure in Concord. Our friendship continued and was get-closer after he was assigned to his parishioners informed by sharing openly about the progress. He was always on the go, and always had new ideas to share. The first time I talked to him in person was after Indian Candle Day in 2013, a few months after we joined Holy Spirit. He was impressed that I knew about the celebration of Candle Day. I told him I learned from co-workers at the company I worked for at that time, had the celebration and gathering for great Indian food as well. He appreciated my congratulations for the history, culture and respect about his home country holiday celebration.

But our friendship really started after I joined his 2014 “40 Days Reflection” from 6:15 a.m. daily when Lent began. I joined that full session and after the daily reflection, mediation, I went to work. This was the first Lent where I really started to learn and know better what Lent is about and how to quietly pray and listen to God’s word. We had Father Mat to come to our house for a blessing and have dinner with us several times. We had several gatherings with him and some other parishioners together as well. He presided over our 25th anniversary as well. I donated and shared with a few people his two of his publications, “From Humor to Inspiration” and “From Rural India to Silicon Valley” the latter, I have not read yet after he died that for me. He was a wonderful lunch and conversation. Interested in learning more about Moreau Catholic High School? Visit us this Fall and discover what it means to be a Mariner. Register for these events: www.moreaucatholic.org/visit

Father Vellankal . . .

(Continued from Page 1.)

said of his pastor, Christa Fairfield, parish life director.

“We’re trying to do our best,” said Father Rojas, who was joined at the Novena on Oct 11 at Holy Spirit, we spoke at each Mass over the weekend, included parochial vicar at Queen of All Saints Parish in Concord and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fremont. In 2015, he published “From Humor to Inspiration: Jokes, Reflections and Quotes to Enliven Your Day!”

God’s goodness and mercy have been amazing and incredible all through my life and I feel so very blessed with my priestly vocation,” he wrote on the 25th anniversary of his ordination.

Father Macadas remembered how that vocation began.

“Father Mathew was ordained to be a missionary,” he said. “In this day and age there’s a lot of talk about missionary discipleship. I think missionary discipleship is something that has to characterize priests of this era. We cannot just be in that missionary mode or in that comfort zone of what we’re used to but we have to go out beyond our comfort zone.”

“Father Mat was the one that embodied that for me. He was truly a missionary disciple.

“He was a man on the go. He did what he had to do. He planted a church, brought it to life, he found the right people and he moved on. It was never about him. It was always about Jesus.”

Father Mathew Vellankal in 2017 was pastor of St Bonaventure Parish in 2017. In addition to his pastoral work, Father Vellankal was a talented magician who performed magic shows as fund-raisers for parishes around the diocese. In 2015, he published “From Humor to Inspiration: Jokes, Reflections and Quotes to Enliven Your Day!” We are going to reach out to where the people are.” Father Vellankal told The Catholic Voice in 2014, when his parish instituted drive-thru prayer.

Small groups of parishioners met drivers and prayed with them in the parish parking lot off busy Fremont Boulevard. Father Vellankal brought drive-thru prayer to St. Bonaventure Parish, too.

Parishioners at Holy Spirit in Fremont began a novena in his memory on Oct. 11; St. Bonaventure began a novena Oct. 13. “God’s goodness and mercy have been amazing and incredible all through my life and I feel so very blessed with my priestly vocation,” he wrote on the 25th anniversary of his ordination.

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Father Mathew Vellankal...

(Continued from Page 1.)

said of his pastor, Christa Fairfield, parish life director. spoke at each Mass over the weekend, announcing Father Vellankal’s death. Some parishioners had seen announcements beforehand; to others it was a shock.

“We’re trying to do our best,” said Father Rojas, who was joined at some weekend Masses by Rev. Aidan McKeane, pastor of St. Columbia Parish in Oakland.

Father Vellankal was born in Avanaya, Kerala, India, and was ordained on Jan. 5, 1987, at St. Michael Church in Randar, India. He was ordained for the Salesians of St. Don Bosco in the Diocese of Kottayam, India.

In India he served as the parish priest at St. John Bosco Shrine in Cherrapu, in leadership at Salesian high schools and as director of the North Eastern Indian Youth Commission.

He served as an international chaplain to the International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth in Brussels, Belgium.

Twenty years after his ordination, on Jan. 25, 2007, he was incorporates in the Diocese of Oakland. His service in the Diocese of Oakland included parochial vicar at Queen of All Saints Parish in Concord and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fremont.

In 2006, he was appointed parochial administrator of Holy Spirit Parish in Fremont. Two years later, he became pastor. He served here until he became Father Mat — a happy, active and work travel lover, and good friend we had.

We are the same as many of his parishioners in Fremont and Concord who are still shocked about the death of Father Mat. At the Novena on Oct 11 at Holy Spirit, we sang, we prayed the rosary, we hugged, there was not too many people, so it was a nice, relaxing lunch and conversation with him. What a day! We will not forget about the good food, good weather and good friendship and good conversation with him!
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scu.edu/president
Pilgrims who ventured on The Catholic Voice Hawaii Pilgrimage, Sept. 8-14, at St. Augustine by the Sea Church in Waikiki, Honolulu. The parish campus is the home of the Damien Museum, which houses several relics of St. Damien and related historical artifacts. A 20-minute video is shown about Father Damien and his work with Kalaupapa leprosy settlement.

Pilgrims to ‘exotic’ Hawaii learn the ‘gifts’ of aiding the sick

By Don Marquez
Special to The Catholic Voice

At first glance, a pilgrimage to Hawaii might sound like a contradiction of terms. But that was just a mere prelude to the next day’s events of St. Damien by Provincial Superior Rev. Herman Gomes, and we were treated to a private viewing of Father Damien’s relics courtesy of archivist Stuart Ching.

One of those artifacts was a pipe used by Father Damien, who took up smoking to mask the stench of the lepers he lived with and served until his death in 1889.

When Damien’s radical response to the Gospel call to mend the woods of Pope Francis for the Church to go out to the Gospel “to all ends of the earth,” as Our Lord instructed, includes even the most exotic places.

We continued on to the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, where Father Damien was ordained in 1864. Part of a bone from his foot is enshrined at the cathedral alongside the mortal remains of Mother Marianne Cope.

On Tuesday, we visited Pearl Harbor, its original condition in 1988. To the right of the church in 1876, and it was restored to dignified burial with a special Mass Oct. 6 and a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Newman Center’s new location on campus.

For the canonization itself, some students meet for liturgies, prayer, service work, discussion groups, social events and often food.

The University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, which formed the first campus Newman Club in 1893, coincidently celebrated the center’s 125th anniversary the week before Cardinal Newman’s canonization with an Oct. 4-5 conference.

The weekend featured a keynote address on “Why Newman Still Matters” by Jonathan Reyes, executive director of the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. There were other talks and panels, roundtable discussions and a gala dinner with an address by John Garvey, president of The Catholic University of America. The weekend wrapped up with a special Mass Oct. 6 and a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Newman Center’s new location on campus.

For the canonization itself, some students planned to attend a watch party in Philadelphia. And although not every campus ministry program is going as all out as Penn Catholic Newman Community, they still planned to celebrate the saint who held universities so close to his heart.

Cardinal Newman spent much of his life at Oxford University as both a student and a fellow. As an Anglican priest, he was the vicar at a university church. After he became Catholic, he founded the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Birmingham, England and a Catholic university in Dublin. Many of his ideas on higher education are in his book “The Idea of a University” based on lectures he gave in the 1850s. Father Gary Braun, director of a University “based on lectures he gave in the 1850s.

We gathered as one ‘ohana (family) for a farewell dinner on Friday night where we exchanged gifts and hugs and received a blessing from Bishop Larry Silva before heading home the next morning filled with gratitude for the love and spirit of Hawaii.

Saints Damien and Marianne, pray for us!

Masses, trips, watch parties mark Cardinal Newman’s canonization

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — St. John Henry Newman dedicated much of his life to the combination of faith and intellect at universities.

So it is only fitting that college Catholic student centers, many named after the upcoming saint, and a Catholic university named after him, celebrated his Oct. 13 canonization with everything from lectures to watch parties and even pilgrimages to Rome for the event.

Cardinal Newman, the British scholar, philosopher, writer and Anglican priest before he was received into the Catholic Church, emphasized that Catholic students who attend public universities must be given a place to gather to support and encourage one another in their faith. That’s why his name is part of many Catholic student centers where Catholic college students meet for liturgies, prayer, service work, discussion groups, social events and often food.

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I am not on a tour. It is more than information and facts about a place. I walk in the footsteps of thousands of people of faith before me who came to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary, to be touched by her simple message to be close to God and to her son, Jesus.

I think about the simple and uneducated people to whom Mary appeared. They did not always understand what they were told to relay at the time. Over many years, thousands of people have come looking for a smile from Mary, for a touch of God’s love to be present in their lives. All I do know is that a spiritual pilgrimage affects a person for "the good." Today there is a statue in the niche in the cave rock where Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception appeared. When I sit and stare at that spot, I do not get goose bumps. I sit with hundreds of others looking for a smile of faith that surrounds me.

We had the spiritual pleasure to celebrate the Eucharist in the Chapel of the Crypt under the larger basilica Church. Walking to the chapel the corridors are lined with plaques of gratitude for healing from over the years. I ask Mary that what has happened to me, to bless each of the shrines is different in land–scape that is arid and rocky, to green, breezy and river flowing through, to high mountains cliffs.

What do I get out of a pilgrimage? I am reminded that silence and quiet are important and a primary way to touch the presence of God.

For what did I pray? I prayed for the healing of my foot neuropathy, for strength in my legs to keep walking and to keep doing ministry. I prayed for the rest of my life and ministry, for my physical and spiritual wellbeing, knowing that my time in God’s time.

I was part of a group of 40 parishioners from various parishes in the Diocese of Oakland visiting the famous shrines of Mary: Our Lady of Fatima, Portugal; Our Lady of Lourdes, France; Our Lady of Montserrat in the mountains near Barcelona, Spain. Each of the shrines is very different, one from another. Both Fatima and Lourdes mark appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mother: in Fatima, Our Lady of the Rosary, and in France, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. Montserrat in Spain is very different, venerating an ancient statue of Mary from the ninth century and a beloved place of pilgrimage. The early visits to France shaped the country’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Bernadette Soubirous opened the spring of healing water with her hand scratching its earth surface until it poured forth into a stream that has not stopped to this day. It was at the instruction of the Blessed Virgin Mary that St. Bernadette clawed the spring open in 1858.

By Rev. Richard Mangini
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Respect life in all seasons

By Michele Jurich

About 40 leaders in parish respect life ministries and other locally based min-
stries, including the Gabriel Project and El Santo California, met in the parish hall of the Cathedral of Christ the Light on Oct. 5 for the annual Respect Life gathering. Organized by the diocesan Office of Life and Justice, the day’s events included speakers and opportunities for fellowship for those who work in the ministry. The speakers were younger than most of the participants, offering a fresh look at a beloved ministry.

The opening reflection by the Very Rev. Brandon Macadagd, rector of the Cathedral of Christ the Light, drew its inspiration from the US bishop’s Christ Our Hope in Every Season of Life theme. Using examples of his family’s life, Father Macadagd spoke of respecting life from its beginning and through it, including facing serious medical complications along the journey.

“We saw that Jesus Christ is real,” he said. “Jesus continues to be with us in our crisis,” he said, whether it be through preg-
nancy, the daily struggles of life, illness, or at the end of life.

“They need to see that Jesus Christ is real and that God is faithful through it all,” he said. He told the story of donating a kidney to his mother in 2016.

“To me, this is a great opportunity for us to care for another person, we have to love them,” he said, be that a friend, or someone one encounters. “We have to really love them. You want and desire the good for that other person, their flourish-
ing, their desire, their happiness.”

Aimee González and Moises De Leon, an engaged couple who have trained to become teachers in the Billings Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning, spoke to the gathering not only about the method but about the Theology of the Body. The method is to achieve or postpone pregnancy, Gonzalez said. “This is a method that can be used throughout your whole life,” she said. It can also be useful in spotting illness, she said.

“You are advocating for yourself,” she said.

The couple has made presentations on Natural Family Planning to engaged couples at the marriage preparation programs of the Diocese of Oakland.

María José Fernández Flores, legisla-
tive advocate for the California Catholic Council in Sacramento, presented infor-
mation on pending legislation. Much of the legislation was sitting on the governor’s desk, awaiting his signature or veto.

Fernandez Flores told the story of her dif-
hicult birth in a Catholic hospital in Peru 23 years ago. Her mother prayed to save her newborn’s life.

“I have a mission in this life,” Fernandez Flores said. “God allowed me to live.”

She encouraged those in attendance to let the governor know their stance on the legislation, particularly opposition to a bill that would allow chemical abortions on University of California campus-
es, and on a measure that would add the phone number for a reproductive care provider to insurance appli-
cation cards.

“...we need to speak up,” she said.

María José Fernández Flores, legislative advocate for the California Catholic Council in Sacramento, presented information on pending legislation in Sacramento to the Respect Life gathering in Oakland on Oct. 5.

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Dioecesan school superintendent, Kathleen Badiecke, was one of several speak-
ers who encouraged athletic directors to see CYO as a fun, child-oriented ministry, positively affecting the lives of young people.

Athletic directors plan to keep CYO fun, positive, child-oriented ministry

By Bill Ford

Special to The Catholic Voice

How to best serve our CYO players in our parishes and Catholic schools and how those players can continue to have fun in CYO were the themes of the annual CYO Athletic Directors’ Seminar, held recently at Moreau Catholic High School and St. Clement Church in Hayward.

Seventy-eight CYO athletic directors gathered for a morning that began with Mass, followed by presentations, group discussions and reflection.

Rev. Michael Nautalé, parochial vicar at St. Patrick Church in Rodeo, celebrated the Mass at St. Clement Church. Father Nautalé was a former CYO player at St. Patrick, his home parish. He reminded the ADs of the significance of their youth ministry and the importance of maintaining close ties with their parishes and Catholic schools.

Bill Vaughn, music minister at Assumption School in San Leandro, voiced a special choir with Assumption CYO players. Players from other parishes also helped with the Mass.

Next, there was a series of presenta-
tions by staff members of the diocesan Department of Catholic Schools: Kathleen Badiecke, diocesan superintendent; Rodney Pierre-Antoine, executive direc-
tor of the Lumen Christi Academies; and Jocelyn Pierre-Antoine, associate super-
intendent of Catholic Schools.

Each offered unique perspectives on CYO, as all were former CYO players, coaches and school administrators. The speakers shared their educational expertise with techniques and stories to inspire the ADs to lead their players to keep CYO fun, positive, child-oriented ministry.
“Many people are angry with God.”
— Sandy Heinisch, Grief counselor

Three days in November: A grief retreat at San Damiano

By Michele Jurich
Staff writer
What happened to God?
In her time in grief ministry, it’s a question Sandy Heinisch has heard before.
“Many people are angry with God,” said Heinisch, who will be presenting a grief retreat at San Damiano Retreat in Danville on Nov. 22-24.
If it was her own grief — the death of her eldest son — that led Heinisch, a nurse by training, into another chapter of her life, counseling those who grieve, she took extensive training in counseling through the Contra Costa Crisis Center, National Catholic Ministry to the Bereaved and the grief minister training in 2009.
A parishioner at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Brentwood, she has led grief ministry training for the Diocese of Oakland, as well as the dioceses of Sacramento, San Diego, Bakersfield, Fresno and Phoenix. Men in formation to be ordained deacons for the Diocese of Oakland are trained by her in grief ministry.
Heinisch is currently a grief counselor at her home parish, as well as at Church of the Good Shepherd Parish in Pittsburg. She conducts support groups for parents who have lost a child, for widows and widowers; and for teens. In addition, she conducts more than 500 counseling sessions a year.
She is described by her husband of 57 years as: “Trying Sandy is like trying to stop an Amtrak train going 85 mph.”
The opportunity to conduct a three-day grief retreat at San Damiano was appealing in many ways. “Both of my sons worked there,” she said. “Frankie was the cook. Paul was the dishwasher.”

Grief Retreat
Presented by Sandy Heinisch
When: Nov. 22-24
Where: San Damiano Retreat
710 Highland Drive, Danville
Reservations: 586-837-9141
https://sandamiano.org/

The retreat’s brochure sums it up: “The loss of someone you love changes you forever. Whether that loss is through death or divorce, the journey of recovery is long, difficult and unique.”

Heinisch’s goal in the retreat is to help participants to better understand the journey, as well as provide them with hope, spiritual tools, peace and guidance on the grief path.
She will try to help participants to understand the emotions at each stage of grief. She will also offer tips to get through the holidays.
Participants will leave with resources and tips on journaling, book suggestions, parishes that have grief ministry and tips on journaling.

With David Nicoll, Heinisch is the co-author of “Lights for Dark Places,” a book of her poetry and his illustrations.

“Many people are angry with God.”
— Sandy Heinisch, Grief counselor
Finding solace at Vallombrosa — in Silicon Valley, no less

By Michele Jurich
Staff writer

Silicon Valley might seem like an odd place to seek solace. But welcome to the Vallombrosa Center in Menlo Park, a ministry of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, where 200 trees, three shrines and a pair of rabbits invite you to contemplate the outdoors. A motto of the retreat center might well be: Slow down.

Retreats at Vallombrosa can be small or large, but large may not be what many retreat attendees are seeking, said David Fencl, director of operations. “We find that people coming here don’t want noise and commotion,” he said. “There seems to be a real need for something very, very quiet.”

There are 156 hosted events a year at Vallombrosa, including retreats for the priests of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, who arrive in two sessions, and the Diocese of Las Vegas. Area high schools engage the center for Kairos retreats, and Vallombrosa is also the site for business retreats during the year.

Private retreats are also offered, depending on availability. Vallombrosa has 100 beds. Three apartments are available, with consideration for families of long-term care patients at Stanford Medical Center.

Proximity to 24-hour Eucharistic Adoration at Church of the Nativity, as well as the chapel of the cloistered Dominican Sisters across the street, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. — vespers at 5 p.m. — give those on retreat opportunity for prayer.

Upcoming public events on the Vallombrosa calendar include a Thanksgiving-themed concert by the Vallombrosa Choir 2 p.m. Nov. 17. Proceeds from the concert, which coincides with World Day of the Poor, will be split with the Catholic church in Paradise, California, which continues to struggle in the aftermath of last year’s Camp Fire.

The previous year, the concert benefited the Diocese of Santa Rosa. In 2017, an “Art is Prayer” retreat is set for Dec. It’s “Don’t Tell Anybody, Santa is Coming.” Children will leave their shoes at the door and go into a room to hear the story of St. Nicholas on his feast day. When the children return to their shoes, they will find them filled with candy.

Those seeking the quiet of Vallombrosa might well keep their eyes open to see two of the resident creatures: Regina and Snoopy Regina. Fencl said, is a 27-pound former Cadbury Easter Bunny, while Snoopy is “quick, quick, quick.”

Fencl is all in favor of getting people out of the building, as beautiful as it is, and strolling the grounds. Vallombrosa is set on 10 acres. There’s a shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes, with a plaza and the Spiritual Works of Mercy engraved on stone. A Garden of the Corporal works of Mercy is dedicated to Mother Teresa, the saint from Calcutta.

The retreat center is also the new home of rose bushes removed from homes undergoing extensive remodeling. Gardeners bring the roses that have been ripped out to Vallombrosa, where they will find a welcome new home.

Fencl said gardeners have told him, “We bring them here to Mother Teresa, who cared about people no one cared about.”

Vallombrosa integrates a wooded setting with meeting rooms in our Mansion, new manicured gardens and shrines, business grade wi-fi, and great food in a memorable experience Easy Caltrain/BART connection. To Register for Retreats please visit our website at: www.vallombrosa.org/calendar

Shrine to Our Lady

In 2018, a benefactor attending a sponsored retreat and offered to reconstruct the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes originally built in the early 50s. The vision grew with associated project of gardens and a plaza — named for the beloved, late Rev. Kevin Gaffey, a priest in residence at Vallombrosa who had a great devotion to Our Lady. This artist’s rendering includes a Fountain of St. Bernadette and the “Path of Spiritual Works” with two formal gates and numerous benches surrounding the Shrine and creating a quiet and sacred space for prayer, reflection and devotion. If you are interested in helping this project come to life with a donation of any size, including personalized memorials, visit Vallombrosa.org/shrine or call us at 650-325-5614 Monday through Friday and ask for Dave Fencl.
Hush hour: Silent retreats teach people inner peace and outer quiet

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis hung a bright red sign on his home-office door two summers ago that reads, "No Complaining Allowed.

It was a succinct reminder to guests at his residence of one of his favorite invitations: drop the "sourpuss" scowl and radiate the true joy that comes from being loved by God.

Even his more formal visitors get a similar, more subtle, message as they enter the apostolic palace where the pope receives bishops and heads of state and holds other important gatherings.

Near the elevators people take to reach the papal study or meeting halls, the pope has authored, Father Antenucci's three- year developing and offering special encouragement of holy and humble silence (Continued on Page 12.)

Upcoming retreats

Oct. 25 to 27
Rachel's Vineyard Retreat in Danville. Rachel's Retreat is a safe place to renew, rebuild, and redeem hearts broken by abortion. The weekend offers a supportive, non-judgmental environment to transform the pain of the past into love and hope. Women and men are encouraged to attend. All names and contacts are strictly confidential. Information: contact Gloria Maldonado, afterthechoice® oakidomadm.org or 510-485-2974 or Kim Fuentes, kfuente@stlouisdeces.org or 209-666-5433.

Wednesday, Nov. 6
Day of Prayer — Old Psalms, New Cosmos, Our Lives, 9:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. at Santa Sabina Center, 25 Magnolia Ave., San Rafael. Facilitator: Sister Barbara Green, OP. Psalm 102 will help us explore possibilities. Our silent reflective day together closes with liturgy at 1:15 p.m. Suggested offering: $20. Information: call 415-457-7727.

Nov. 14 to 17
Rev. Tom Weston Day 4 Retreat. At Villa Maria del Mar Retreat, 21918 E Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz. Father Thomas C. Weston, SJ has been involved in AA 12-Step Programs since 1976. A former director of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and a teacher at Loyola High School in Los Angeles, he has degrees and experience in counseling, education and theology. Information: call 831-475-1236.

Friday, Nov. 15
Day of Gratitude. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame. Don't we all deserve peace in our hearts and world? Come and join us for a "peace ful" day, a time in which we can reflect on all that we have been given and learn some gratefulness practices. Cost: $30. Bring a bag lunch. Walk-ins are welcome. Information/registration: 650-340-7474 or visit www.mercy-center.org.

Nov. 15 to 19
Merced Center Retreat — Finding the Divine in The Feminine. At San Damiano (Continued on Page 12.)

You Are wonderfully Made: Welcome & Respect for Transgender Individuals & Their Families

Deacon Raymond Dever, 11/8 — 11/10

Five True Things: How to Embrace Life's Big Challenges with David Richo, PhD & MFT, 11/9


Grief Retreat with Sandy Heinisch, 11/22 — 11/24

Atitude of Gratitude as Thanksgiving

Tom Gorham and staff from Options Recovery 11/29 — 12/1

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More information or register

710 Highland Dr., Danville, CA 925 837 9141
sandamiano.org and on Facebook

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Looking for spiritual growth?

Workshops and retreats at Mercy Center Burlingame to end the year and begin anew!

May We All Be One: Centering Prayer Retreat

Advent Day of Prayer at Mercy Center

David Richo Workshop: Spiritual Resources

Mercy Center Year-End Silent Retreat

Br. Don Bissom Events in January 2020

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Psychology and Spirituality Day Workshop

Catherine of Siena: Mystic and Prophet

Exciting New Program Series in 2020

Women Who Knew Jesus: 5 Sundays 1-4 pm

Go to mercy-center.org for more information about private and overnight retreats, events, programs and conferences. We carry a wide selection of books and gifts for your Christmas shopping.

2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame CA 94010 | 650.340.7474

Cappucini Father Emiliano Antenucci presents an image of Our Lady of Silence to Pope Francis at the Vatican earlier this year.

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Upcoming retreats . . .

(Continued from Page 17.)

Retreat, 710 Highland Drive, Danville. Presented by Rev. Rusty Shaughnessy, OFM, and Karla Obernesser. God is beyond gender, yet Genesis says that both male and female are included in the "image of God" (1:27). This weekend we will connect with the Divine in us and around us. Cost: $245 for private room, $215 per person for double occupancy. Information/registration: visit www.sandamiano.org or 925-837-9141.

Nov. 22 to 24
Grief Retreat presented by Sandy Heinisch. At San Damiano Retreat, 710 Highland Drive, Danville. The loss of someone you love changes you forever. Whether that loss is through death or divorce, the journey of recovery is long, difficult and unique. This retreat will help you understand better the journey. It will give you spiritual tools, peace and guidance on this grief path. Cost: $245 for private room/$215 per person for double occupancy. Information/registration: visit www.sandamiano.org or 925-837-9141.

Sunday, Nov. 24
Art is Prayer. 9:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Vallombrosa Center, 250 Oak Grove Ave., Merito Park. A retreat designed to allow us “To find God in all things.” This one-day retreat is designed to bring us together in prayer, creative expression and in community. Cost: $45. Information: visit vallombrosa.org or call 650-326-5614.

Dec. 6 to 8
Silent Retreat for Men and Women. At St. Clare’s Retreat House, 2381 Laurel Glen Road, Soquel. Conducted by the Daughters of Carmel Nurses. $225 per person (single occupancy/private bathroom): $200 per person (single occupancy/shared bathroom); $185 per person (double occupancy/shared room). Registration will close on Nov. 25. Register at inputy.com/retreatsilent2019. Information: 650-326-8618 or daughtersofcarmel@gmail.com.

Men’s Recovery Retreat — Non-Silent Retreat for Men. At Jesuit Retreat Center of Los Altos, 300 Manresa Way, Los Altos. Facilitator: Peter McGee. Let’s reflect on our shared pilgrimage toward freedom and sobriety. We will experience how our 12-Steps can help us sustain and stand better the journey. It will give you hope, spiritual tools, peace and guidance on this grief path. Cost: $245 for private room, $215 per person for double occupancy. Information/registration: visit www.sandamiano.org or 925-837-9141.

Saturday, Dec. 7
When We’re Triggered We Have Spiritual Resources — A Workshop with David Richo. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame. Join us when David Richo returns to Mercy Center for a new workshop based on his upcoming book, “Triggers: How We Can Stop Reacting and Start Healing.” Registration: $75. Bring a bag lunch. Information/registration: call 650-340-7474 or visit www.mercy-center.org.

Jan. 9 to 13, 2020
Discernment Retreat. At El Paso, Texas (U.S.-Mexico border). Come and discern if you are called to service, experiences in community with other seekers. Cost: $240 commuter; $230 non-commuter. Information/registration: visit vallombrosa.org or call 650-326-5614.

Upcoming retreats . . .

Villa Maria del Mar
Villa Maria del Mar is on the beach at 21918 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz. Among its upcoming retreat offerings: the Art of Journaling: Discovering God in the Written Word, with Sister Molly Neville, SNJM, and Susan Cufarelli Burke. The day retreat runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 30; cost is $85, which includes lunch. Details: 931-475-1236.

Embrace life’s challenges
Psychotherapist David Richo will lead a retreat. Five True Things: How to Embrace Life’s Big Challenges Nov. 9 at San Damiano Retreat, 710 Highland Ave., Danville. Cost: $85 and includes lunch. Information/registration: visit www.sandamiano.org or 925-837-9141, ext. 315.

Silent retreat: Does Jesus care?

May we all be one
Psychologist Catherine Begun and Rev. Amber Sturgess will lead a retreat: Centering Prayer and the Path of Oneness from 6 p.m. Nov. 15 through lunch on Nov. 17 at Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame. Registration closes Nov. 8. $325 overnight or $285 commuter. More at www.mercy-center.org or 650-340-7474.

St. Clare’s Retreat
2381 Laurel Glen Road
Soquel, CA 95073

November – January 2020

November 1-3 — Retiro No Silencio en Espańol 1 (Mujeres) — Padre Eusebio Aramburu — San Rafael, CA
November 8-10 — Retiro No Silencio en Espańol 2 (Hombres y Mujeres) — Padre Roberto Vera

December 6-8 — Men’s & Women’s Silent Retreat — Daughters of Carmel Nurses

January 24-26, 2020 — Men’s & Women’s Holy Thursday Retreat

12 — THE CATHOLIC VOICE OCTOBER 21, 2019
By Michele Jurich
Staff writer

“When you’re discerning a vocation, you do a lot in a short amount of time,” said Ramon Urbina, a seminarian who is in his pastoral year of formation in the Diocese of Oakland.

Bracketed by academic work at a seminary, the pastoral year gives the seminarian an experience he will not have inside the classroom.

“We get a glimpse — a taste — of what life is like in a parish,” Urbina said. Urbina is not assigned to a single ministry. “The point is to be involved in as many ministries as possible,” he said.

Among the ways he ministers: giving a reflection at a daily Mass; helping out with the parish’s vibrant confirmation program; getting to know the charismatic groups, both English and Spanish speakers; men’s ministry, Band of Brothers; and bringing Holy Communion to a nursing home.

Among the other joys are visits to the parish school. “They asked really good questions,” he said of fourth-graders he recently visited at St. Raymond School, Dublin.

How long have you thought about being a priest? What’s your favorite food? When was God born?

For Urbina, 30, the discernment began in his home parish, Most Holy Rosary in Antioch, where the Dominican Fathers staffed the parish for 154 years. “I didn’t feel called to their way of life,” he said, although their role as defenders of the faith, and the habits, were “cool.”

He discerned with the Divine Word Missionaries, studying with them for three years in Iowa, and entering their novitiate in Chicago. “I did like the idea of being a missionary,” he said.

After additional discernment, he felt called to ministry in parishes in the United States. “We could reach more people,” he said. “That’s where the families are.”

The parish, he said, is the “front line.” He felt called to his home diocese because “they want more priests in parish work,” he said. Being able to serve close to home, near family and friends, is an additional blessing.

When Deacon Peter Lawongkerd began his year as a pastoral associate at St. Joseph Basilica Parish in Alameda, he was offered confirmation as his ministry. “You are not alone,” he was promised.

With 10 volunteers devoted to the ministry — up from two the previous year — the ministry is ready to serve the teenagers. It’s a two-year program, with 15 students returning from last year and 25 just beginning.

“People know we need help and they sign up,” said Deacon Lawongkerd, 31. He is particularly grateful for their ministry.

(Continued on Page 14.)
More than half of priests say retreats influence vocation

By Mary Farrow

Catholic News Agency

This year, 481 men in the United States will enter in cathedral churches and be ordained as Catholic priests for Jesus Christ. The average man entering the priesthood this year looks something like this: he’s about 33 years old, which is slightly younger than the previous two classes of incoming priests. He was born in the U.S., he got his college degree and worked full time before entering seminary, and he was baptized Catholic as an infant, according to data collected by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) from 1,000 transitional deacons.

Deacon Ambrosio Dobrozsi is one of those incoming priests. A 28-year-old transitional deacon with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Dobrozsi said he first had the thought to become a priest while having a vision during Mass in second grade. Then high school came and two things happened: he went on a retreat at the seminary, and he discovered girls. Priestly aspirations aside — for a time.

After high school, Dobrozsi dated a girl in college for three years, he said, “I knew I needed to go,” he said, “I think God put me here for a reason,” he said, “It’s rewarding,” he said, “I love it here and they are supportive.”

Cameron-Smith attends Bishop White Seminary in Spokane, Washington.

Deacon Peter Lawongkerd assists Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ, at the Chrism Mass earlier this year.

For seminarians...

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For seminarians...
Animals blessed

Golden retrievers, spaniels, golden retriever-like breeds, even a gecko named Saturn were among the pets and small and smelly that were presented at the annual Blessings of the Animals throughout the Diocese of Oakland. The blessings are held in various locations, some near the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (Oct. 4). St. Francis is the patron saint of animals and the environment.

At the blessing, in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in San Ramon, the Rev. Ray Succo began it by quoting St. Francis, who said, “Birds are in God’s house.”

The event continued in the center of the basilica, with the Rev. Brandon Slaughter, OFM, blessing 26 cats and dogs in the “Blessing of Animals” at the Church of the Good Shepherd Parish in Pittsburg, and the Rev. Nancy Haas blessing 22 other animals throughout the diocese.

The animals and their owners were presented in order, and each animal was named and blessed before the mass concluded.

October . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

2010, then the numbers went back up to 131,193 in 2011. Fair said. For the years 2012-2015 attendance ranged from a high of 127,900 to a low of 122,427. Starting in 2016, attendance has dropped each year from 117,452 in 2016 to 111,062 in 2018.

The Mass counts are done annually during October in most U.S. parishes. The data is one of several tools used by church officials in planning.

Data from other sources, including parish registrations and Census and other survey data indicate about 500,000 Catholics are in the East Bay.

A variety of what Fair called “external factors” impact Mass attendance and include the clergy sex crisis and pastoral leadership changes. She cited the 9-11 attacks as an example of “societal” factors that impact attendance, noting that after the terrorist attacks in the U.S. Mass attendance in the diocese was at its highest in 2001 at 139,220.

Previous October Counts reveal other interesting trends:

• There are several individual parishes that have higher Mass counts than combined counts for some of the deaneries. There are 21 parishes with weekend attendance of 300 or more in Oakland, Berkeley and Alameda. Overall, the number of weekend attendance in Oakland has increased 28.5% from 2000-2018. Conversely, Region 3: Northeast, with Deaneries 9 (Pleasant Hill, Martinez and Concord – six parishes) and Deanery 10 (Pittsburg, Bay Point, Brookeville, Antioch, Oakley and Byron – eight parishes) has seen a growth in attendance of 14.2% from 2000-2018.

The planning board of the diocese uses the numbers and trends gleaned from the October Count to determine the health and vitality of the parishes in the diocese, Fair said. That information is used in conjunction with other documents and resources, such as the Ten Essentials of Parish Life, to inform the board in making decisions about parish expansions, mergers or contractions, and other matters that fall under the agenda of the planning board.

Bishop asks future officers to remember importance of chaplains

Special to The Catholic Voice

EMMITSBURG, Maryland — The National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton welcomed more than 400 visitors Oct. 6 for its annual Pilgrimage for the Sea Services. St. Seton is the Patroness of the Sea Services, which include the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines and Public Health Service. The pilgrimage is co-sponsored each year by the Seton Shrine and the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, to pray for those who serve, and those who serve.

The event commenced with a 3 p.m. Mass in the Basilica. The Most Rev. Michael C. Barber, S.J., a retired chaplain in the Navy Reserve, was the principal celebrant and homilist. Six priests concelebrated, including two from the AME Revs. Christopher Armstrong, judicial vicar, and Adam Logan, OCSO, director of vocations.

Among those in the congregation were active-duty and retired personnel, including members of the Catholic War Veterans & Auxiliary of the United States. A group of midshipmen from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York, participated, and one of them, plebe Anna Hercules, served as lector. The Naval Academy Catholic Choir, led by director Monte Maxwell, provided the music.

In his homily, Bishop Barber observed how fear of death, the seafarer’s constant companion, can lead to spiritual awakenings. He recalled his own experience as a chaplain visiting encamped Marines along the Kuwait-Iraq border as they awaited the call leading up to the 2003 U.S. invasion.

Bishop Michael C. Barber, S.J. of Oakland at the Pilgrimage for the Sea Services in Emmitsburg, MD, on Oct. 6, 2019.

He advised them, “All our laws are in God’s hands. If today is not your day to die, no bullet will find you. If today is your day, the only thing keeping you from heaven is mortal sin. We have a remedy for sin, the Sacrament of Confession, which washes sin away.”

Bishop Barber told the Marines he would not leave camp until everyone who wanted forgiveness had a chance to go to confession. He said all of them accepted the invitation, even the non-Catholics.

Bishop Barber had a special message for the midshipmen in attendance: “Someday soon,” he said, “you will become a commanding officer or a captain of a ship. It is vitally important you provide a priest-chaplain to your crew if you are going into harm’s way. If you are ordering young men and women into battle, in which they very well may die in defense of their country, you owe it to them — to give them the chance to be ‘in the state of Grace.’”

Mass was followed by a banquet served compliments of the Seton Shrine.

October 21, 2019

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Staff report

More than 150 walkers at three locations in Contra Costa County raised more than $9,000 at the 12th annual Friends of The Poor Walk on Sept. 28. Funds raised by the walkers in Concord, Danville and Pinole benefit St. Vincent de Paul’s Contra Costa programs, including Rental & Utility Assistance, Free Food Pantries, Free Medical Clinic, Free Dining Room, Daytime Homeless Shelter, Clothing/Furniture for the needy, job training for the difficult to employ and 29 neighborhood-based teams of volunteers that assist the needy. One hundred percent of funds raised remain in Contra Costa County.

At St. Isidore Parish in Danville, De La Salle High School students Dante and Michael Bari, and St. Isidore School students Jenna Baloou and Leo Gallagher coordinated the walk. Many participants from St. Isidore School and the Danville High School confirmation program participated in the Danville walk.

Armanino Foundation of San Ramon was the Friends of the Poor Walk Sponsor for the Danville school.

Over the past year, St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County provided more than $600,000 in direct financial aid and more than $1.5 million of in-kind services to those in need in the county.

Those who need help, or those who would like to help, may contact St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County at www.svdp-cc.org.

OBITUARIES

Rev. Stanislaus Poon

Rev. Stanislaus Poon, a retired priest of the Diocese of Oakland, died Oct. 9. He was 92.

Father Poon was born on April 14, 1927 in Shanghai, China, to a prominent family that traced its Catholic roots back to the time of Marco Polo. He attended Catholic schools and was graduated from Shanghai College of Law. As a young lawyer he translated papal documents from Latin to Chinese in his spare time for Bishop James Edward Walsh of the Manyroff Missionaries. Eventually Poon was forced to leave mainland China after the Communist takeover in 1949.

As a refugee in Macau, then a Portuguese colony, he began working with the Salesians at a trade school. After several years the Salesians convinced him to become a priest and sent him to their seminary in Turin, Italy, according to an account in the Catholic Voice. Poon was ordained to the priesthood.

After his ordination to the priesthood on March 25, 1962 in Naples, Italy, Father Poon served as a Salesian priest in Hong Kong and mainland China. “He was a marvelous priest,” Bishop Cummins said.

Father Poon will be greatly missed by the Chinese Catholic community, said Deacon Danny Wong of the diocesan Chinese Pastoral and Cultural Center. Although Father Poon was not actively involved in center activities in recent years, he continued to consult with people up until the end of his life. “He was always concerned about the welfare of the Chinese people,” Deacon Wong said.

The priest, who served as associate pastor at Assumption Parish in San Leandro and at St. Michael Parish in Livermore, was active in the Knights of Columbus community in Livermore for many years. He served as chaplain to the Livermore council and as chaplain to the Fourth Degree Holy Spirit Assembly.

The funeral Mass was held Oct. 16 at St. Michael Church in Livermore. Internment followed in St. Michael Cemetery.

Friends of the Poor raise money for SVdP of Contra Costa County

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Fall into Going
An evening of good company and good art, supports spiritual Education Department on Nov. 2 at Fall into Going, The Church of the Good Shepherd Parish in Pittsburg.

Sunday, Nov. 3
School of the Madeleine Festival, 11 a.m. St. Hubertus, Berkeley

Thursday, Oct. 24
7 p.m. at St. John Vianney in Alameda. Every fourth Thursday (third Friday in November and December). www.facebook.com/TaizeOnThaisland.

Friday, Nov. 15
8 p.m. in the chapel, Dominican Sisters of Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, 4326 Del Rios St. More information at missiontmemorial.com, FriarsThird. Fridays. Third Thursdays

Saturday, Nov. 7
7 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish in Pinole. This is a video series by DisciplesCare. Questions/registration, email Rosemarie McKenney, RMcKenney@sjasr.org or 510-933-6360 or msjdominicans.org or 510-933-6360

Sunday, Nov. 3
Mass of Remembrance. 7:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 4001 Storrings Drive, Antioch. Bring a small memento or picture of your loved one who is present.

Communication Skills Workshop for individuals, Couples or Families: Tips and Techniques for Improving Communication. 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Parish Hall at the Church of the Good Shepherd, 119 Brandon Road at Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Cost is $245 for private room; $215 per person. For more information contact Gale Haux, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. No RSVP. Workshop is free. For more information contact Gale at 925-501-0510.

Saturday, Nov. 2
All Souls Day Mass. 11 a.m. in all Catholic Funeral and Cemetery Services cemeteries. Information: rosarychurch.com.

Monday, Nov. 4
Mass of the Rosary. 7:30 a.m. at St. Joseph Church, 458 Maple St., Livermore.

OCTOBER 21, 2019
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THE CATHOLIC VOICE — 17

FALL EVENTS
Oct. 25, 26 and 27
Immaculate Heart of Mary Crafty Quilter’s Holiday Boutique. At 500 Fairview Ave., Brentwood. Hours: Oct. 25 Wed. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Oct. 26 Thurs. 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; Oct. 27 Fri. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Handmade items, baked goods, jams, jellies, plants, rare for homesteading and quilt.

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Ministry, ecology, main themes at synod's first week

The first week of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, called by Pope Francis Oct. 7, saw more than 90 voting members of the synod address the assembly and 20 observers, special guests and magistrates from other Christian churches made their interventions. The Vatican synod hall is filled, 184 voting members, 25 experts, 55 observers, six delegates from other Christian communities and 550 special guests who are experts on various topics the synod is discussing. In the formal introductions to the synod’s work Oct. 7 and Pope Francis’ remarks on the occasion, the Vatican has released statements from the synod. Instead, the press office is distributing twice daily statements from Vatican News and invites three or four synod participants to present the press during the midday break.

From the summaries and the comments of briefing participants, the main discussion topics can be grouped as: ministries, the church; destruction of the environment; violence against people; and the region in the context; indigenous rights and culture; evangelization and mission; and migration, including the move of indigenous peoples from villages to cities. Most bishops who lead dioceses in the Amazon support the ordination of married men of proven virtue, or ‘vir virile,’ as a way of addressing the lack of priests in the region. Archbishop of Brazil Bishop Erwin Kräutler of Xingu on Oct. 9. Several bishops and other speakers at the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon proposed the ordination of married men, preferablyolders in their respective communities, as a solution for remote communities that often go from one month to up to one year without the visitation of the bishop.

Synod members called for the Catholic Church to deepen its theological way it would help people recognize “ecological sins.” According to a Vatican News summary of the Oct. 8 afternoon session, members said that an “ecological conversion” was necessary to ensure that Christians understand “the gravity of sin against the environment as a sin against God, against one’s neighbour and against future generations. No to individualism or indifference that makes us look at reality like a spectator, like looking at a screen,” the summary said. “People in Western countries need to see the different cultural expressions of faith that exist in other parts of the world, said some participants at the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon. Panelists attending a Vatican briefing Oct. 7 were asked to comment on the way some media outlets, some of them with links to the political media expressed shock, disdain or concern for the presence of a woman with a bare-breasted pregnant woman during a prayer service in the Vatican Gardens Oct. 4 and about the Catholic indigenous man who brought up the offerings gifts at Mass Oct. 6 with grains of sand adorned with feathers. “It is even more important that the world of Rome and Europe learn that other cultures also know how to live life, about well-being, fraternal coexistence,” Father Joao de Deus Lafron, who leads the Diocese of Cayenne in French Guiana, bordering the Amazon basin, said. It is important people see there is another way to live “and not just consume and accumulate things,” he said through a translator. “There can’t be just one voice. Every culture has its voice and its wisdom,” he added. He said he told the bishops of France years ago that if they were going to talk about ecology, then they also needed to listen to what indigenous people in the American and African continents had to say about their relationship with nature.

New St. Faustina film

WASHINGTON — A new film on the life of St. Faustina Kowalska, the Polish nun whose visions of Jesus led to the establishment of the Divine Mercy devotion, will have a one-night-only showing Oct. 28 on more than 700 screens across the U.S. The film, “Love and Mercy: A Life,” will also have some features about St. Faustina’s life, according to Marian Father Chris Alar, who is seen on-screen during the film. To find a nearby theater and to order tickets, visit www.fathomevents.com.

Evangelium Vitae Medal

NOTRE DAME, Ind. — The University of Notre Dame’s de Neele Center for Ethics and Culture will award its 2019 Notre Dame Evangelium Vitae Medal to Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas. Bishop Seitz was named in February 2018 to head the Diocese of Las Vegas, after 14 years as Helena’s bishop.

New Montana bishop

WASHINGTON — Pope Francis has appointed Father Austin A. Vetter, a priest of the Diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota, to be the bishop of the Diocese of Helena, Montana. The appointment was announced in Washington Nov. 5 and takes effect by Dec. 1. The National Office of Post-Abtortion Reconciliation and Healing, will receive the honor at a Mass and banquet on Dec. 13 in Helena.

New St. Faustina film — A Catholic film on the debtors of Ukraine, a new film about the Divine Mercy devotion, will have a one-night-only showing Oct. 28 on more than 700 screens across the U.S. The film, “Love and Mercy: A Life,” will also have some features about St. Faustina’s life, according to Marian Father Chris Alar, who is seen on-screen during the film. To find a nearby theater and to order tickets, visit www.fathomevents.com.

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Library filters

What is brilliant about the corruption of the Church is that it has managed to get more and more adult content publishers to agree to its terms while holding parents responsible for their youngsters. Knowing that the world is going digital, following the initiative of the young the young out is basically becoming obsolete. This is an opportune moment to reflect both the library and the card bearer. 

Thomas Lynch
Berkeley

Another side

R. Frank (Forum, Oct. 7) and others need to know there is another side to the climate story. In a recent article, a letter signed by 500 scientists, engineers and other professionals from around the globe on behalf of Amsterdam-based Climate Intelligence Foundation was delivered to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The letter states in part that “it is crucial to act on climate change. Meanwhile, the squandering of trillions of dollars on the next big bubble (whatever that may be) will mean immediate risk to eer, a variety of issues including the self-racial-mutation models of climate). Current climate policies pointlessly and grievously undermine the economic system, putting lives at risk in countries denied accessible, reliable electoral energy. 

In their letter, they also point out that CO2 has a beneficial effect on plants and animals, it has not drastically increased over time and energy over the past 50 years. However, CO2 mitigation measures are as damaging as it is costly. The consequences of climate change, such as floods, hurricanes, storms, wildfires, bird and bats, and palm-oil plantations destroy the biodiversity of the rainforests.

Another scientist who studies climate, Karl Zuebl, points out in “Walchens, the anti-humanism of scaremongering false prophets, such as Malthus [‘An Essay on the Principle of Population,’ 1798), Rhode (‘The Population Bomb,’ 1967), and the Club of Rome (‘Limits to Growth,’ 1972).

VANTAGE POINTS

What kind of ‘believers’?

By George Weigel

This past June I was in the Munich region, and it was doing so, irrespective of what the sur-

George Weigel is distinguished senior fellow and William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Germans press ‘reform’

Catholic News Service

OXFORD, England — Germany’s Catholic bishops are due to hold a national reform consultation, or “syndical way,” despite cautions from the Vatican and criticism from some bishops. 

At their spring assembly, the German bishops decided by common consent to follow the syndical way, and they’ve continued this approach at their latest plenary, in Fulda,” said Matthias Kopp, spokesman for the Bonn-based bishops’ conference. 

“The syndical way is a ‘way genera’ process, and not a synod in a particular council, and there’ll be no separate German process, without Rome, on questions touching the universal church. We hope to offer ideas and contributions to the universal church,” he said. 

Kopp spoke as documents were published from the bishops’ Sept. 23-24 autumn plenary, clarifying plans for the two-year consultation, organized by the bishops’ conference and lay-led Central Committee of German Catholics. 

He said Oct. 1, the initiative, to be launched in November, has been prompted by “loss of credibility” and “institutional failure” highlighted in a September 2018 church-commissioned report, which detailed the cases of more than 3,600 children sexually abused by Catholic clergy over six decades.

The German bishops’ conference president, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, had “cleared everything up” during talks Sept. 23-24, said Franzo and others at the conference, and said the bishops were convinced “the reform cannot go any further.” 

“The bishops’ conference has verified that for the current bishops, the separation of powers, sexual moral- 

It is not a de facto state of schism: many of its leaders and intellectuals do not believe what the Catholic Church believes. And because of that, they do not teach what the Catholic Church teaches. Nor does this de facto schism touch on neuro-

sarcasm, which is the Church, has not been offered. That is why there is 2 percent Mass attendance in the United States. The American truth is the only path toward a German solution. It is a comfortable way to say to the rest of the world.

(”George Weigel is distinguished senior fellow and William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.)

Want to write?

Contributions to Reader’s Forum should be limited to 250 words. Letters must be signed and must include the writer’s address and phone number for verification purposes. All letters are subject to editing. Writers are generally limited to four letters in any 12-month period.

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Our e-mail address is: Forum@cvoak.org

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Celebrate God’s presence in the Mass at 11:00 am on the first Saturday of every month at each of our Cemeteries. Please join us in remembrance of loved ones.

Hayward: Holy Sepulchre Cemetery
Antioch: Holy Cross Cemetery
Lafayette: Queen of Heaven Cemetery
San Pablo: St. Joseph Cemetery
Oakland: St. Mary Cemetery
Livermore: St. Michael Cemetery*

* Saturday Mass not available

Remembering those who we have laid to rest in our Catholic Cemeteries during the month of September.

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